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(*f*) whether it is also a fact that the President subsequently issued instructions to his office to renew bus-licences for the quarter beginning with the 1st January 1928, only on payment of arrears of toll-fees due by the bus-licensees to the toll-farmer ;

(*g*) whether the action of the President was *ultra vires* ;

(*h*) in how many cases the arrears of tolls due to the toll-contractor was recovered under the President's orders during December 1927 and January 1928 ;

(*i*) in how many such cases receipts were granted to the parties concerned ; and in how many such cases receipts were not issued ;

(*j*) whether the receipts granted in such cases were such as would be treated as valid under the Madras Local Boards Act ; and if not, why not ;

(*k*) whether it is a fact that the District Board Office received payment of arrears of toll-fees in cash ;

(*l*) whether the Government propose to call upon the President to explain why his office received such payments while the licence fees were expected to be paid into the Government treasury, and to account for the payments ;

(*m*) the total amount paid by the President to the toll-farmer, from collections of arrears of tolls due from the bus-licensees ;

(*n*) whether the President obtained a receipt for the payment to the toll-farmer of the arrears collected for him ;

(*o*) whether the above payment was made in cash or refund voucher through the treasury ;

(*p*) whether the District Board have undertaken in their notice announcing auction for the farming out of tolls, that tolls could be levied by the contractor on buses plying for hire with the licence of the District Board ; and

(*q*) whether the Government have received complaints that the President of the District Board has acted illegally as the toll-contractor is a personal friend of his ?

A.—(*a*), (*b*), (*c*) & (*d*) Yes.
(*e*) & (*f*) No.
(*g*) *to* (*o*) These questions do not arise.
(*p*) & (*q*) No.

Municipal Councils

11-15 a.m.

Collection of land tax by municipalities for wet lands.

*1817 *Q.*—Mr. V. Ramjee Rao : Will the hon. the Minister for Education and Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that the municipal councils have been collecting land tax for the wet lands within the municipal limits in addition to land revenue ; and

(*b*) whether the Government have any intention of embodying in the Amending Act contemplated by them, a provision modifying the rule of collecting land tax for wet lands within the municipal limits ?

A.—(*a*) Municipal councils do not collect land revenue. They do, however, collect property tax on wet lands which pay land revenue to the Government.

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(*b*) The property tax is, under the existing Act, leviable at the same rate on both lands and buildings. It is proposed so to amend the Act as to empower municipal councils to levy the property tax on lands at a rate different from that on buildings. It is not intended to exempt altogether agricultural lands from liability to property tax.

Mr. V. Ramjee Rao :—"May I know, Sir, when the Bill is likely to be introduced ?"

The hon. Dr. P. Subbarayan :—"The Bill is almost ready now."

Forests

Death of Mr. Ponnayya, Forest Ranger, Cumbum taluk.

* 1818 Q.—Mr. G. Harisarvottama Rao: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state in reference to answers given to question No. 795 answered on 21st October 1927, regarding the death of Mr. Ponnayya, Forest Ranger, Cumbum taluk—

(*a*) who it was that held the enquiry that is referred to in clause (*a*) of the answer to that question and where ;

(*b*) whether Mr. Ponnayya's wife made a representation to the Collector and whether the villagers of Giddalore sent up petitions to him and the other officers concerned ;

(*c*) what it was that was alleged in the representation and the petitions ;

(*d*) whether the District Magistrate ever held any enquiry at all ;

(*e*) whether it is a fact that the acting Conservator of Forests summoned 14 witnesses to appear at Diguvametta and then desisted from enquiry ;

(*f*) whether the village munsif concerned failed to make a report of the affair and whether the Divisional Magistrate fined him Rs. 2 for it remarking at the same time that the Sub-Inspector who advised the village munsif that he need not send a report was wrong ; and

(*g*) whether any explanation was taken from the Sub-Inspector in this matter ?

A.—(*a*) The Circle Inspector of Police and the Stationary Sub-Magistrate, Giddalore, made the enquiry at Thirumulla and Giddalore, respectively.

(*b*) & (*c*) The answer to (*b*) is that no petition was received by the Collector of Kurnool.

(*d*) No.

(*e*) No.

(*f*) The village munsif was fined Rs. 2, and the Subdivisional Magistrate, Markapur, also remarked in his order that the Sub-Inspector had no business to ask the village magistrate not to make a report.

(*g*) No.